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Training the Adult Tutor

Tutors are often intrinsically motivated to help children and commit themselves to self-improvement by learning a new skill set. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2011) attributed this desire to help children as emanating from a desire for societal change, satisfying a personal interest, or becoming engaged in the process of self-fulfillment. All of these factors comprise the core principles of andragogy, adult learning theory (Knowles et al., 2011). Tutors typically are self-motivated, knowledgeable and experienced, and appreciate signs of respect.

Generating Content for the Adult Tutor

Adult tutor training must be adapted to fit the individual, social, and community needs of the adult volunteer. Lindeman's (1926) work with adult learners suggested they are "motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy" (p. 52). An adult's orientation to learning becomes meaningful if related to life's experiences, and their experiences are the richest source for their education. Educational training among adult learners will reflect many characteristics of andragogy. Content is effectively generated through the collaborative sharing of problems and questions among adult learners.

Content introduction

Knowles, et al., (2011) state that "authoritative teaching, examinations, and rigid pedagogy have no place in adult education" (p 42). Therefore, the instructional strategies and assessments of tutor training are organized around the principles of adult learning and the external events that occur during instruction. An emphasis on individualization of teaching methods and overall differentiation is provided to all tutor trainees. Opportunities for a variety of collaborative

exercises are essential to the experience of the adult tutor with an emphasis on peer-helping techniques instead of teacher-directed instruction. Each tutor-trainee has a personal calling in their practice and the subtext of the training is to make it a life-centered practice of increasing skill and reaching their full potential as tutors.

Instructional strategies

The instructional events described below are for the use of the instructor. Instructional events provide a template for the sequenced presentation of information, events, and activities that result in the acquisition of the knowledge and skills. Learning events have a beginning, middle, and end (Branch, 2009, p. 88).

Beginning activities. See Figure 1 for recommendations of beginning activities to use when presenting the content contained in each module.

Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction.		
Theory	Beginning Activities	Sample activity
Reception	1. Gaining attention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Share the current event. b. Begin with question "what do you think?" c. Ask level 1 or level 2 question from "Webb of knowledge."
Executive Control	2. Informer learner of lesson.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Review course objectives. e. Post objectives in outline form. f. Video demonstrations of actual performance.
Retrieval	3. Stimulate recall prior to learner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. Pre-test existing skills and knowledge. h. Students summarize prerequisite knowledge and skills.

Figure 1. Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction.
 From: *Instructional design: The ADDIE approach*. by Branch, R.M. (2009)., New York, NY: Springer.
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Middle activities. Middle activities are designed to engage the learner with the use of content exchanges and collaborative discussions. Content exchange and collaborative exchanges are the means by which tutor-trainees acquire knowledge, develop skills, and become more confident with their tutor skills and abilities. Middle activities consist of demonstrations, role play, case-based exercises, peer-teaching, and peer review. Guided and independent practice affords trainees the opportunity to exhibit the knowledge and skills they have gained during training. See Figure 2 for recommendations of middle activities that can be used when presenting the content contained in each module.

Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction.		
Theory	Middle Activities	Sample activity
Selective Perception	1. Presenting content with distinctive features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Multimedia presentation of knowledge and skills. b. Content presented in story-telling format. c. Subject matter as guest speaker.
Semantic Encoding	2. Enhancing retention and learner transfer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Demonstrate knowledge and skill. e. Conduct experiment with student-teacher collaboration. f. Use physical model to portray relationships.
Response Organization	3. Eliciting performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. Role play based upon genuine scenarios. h. Rehearse simulation games. i. Construct job aides displaying relevant skills.
Reinforcement	4. Providing informative feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> j. Peer critique during lesson. k. Suggest alternatives to achieve same results. l. Prove "what-if" questions.
<p>Figure 2.. Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction. From: <i>Instructional design: The ADDIE approach.</i> by Branch, R.M.L. (2009)., New York, NY: Springer. Reprinted with permission.</p>		

Ending activities. The purpose of ending activities is to confirm that tutor-trainees understand the lesson material, demonstrate knowledge and skills, connect to role-play activities and demonstration scenarios, and receive feedback from their peers. Feedback from the adult tutor is valuable when making formative changes to the lesson plan. Feedback from the adult tutor also affords them the experience of attaching personal meaning to the lesson plan and fulfills their role as stakeholder. See Figure 3 for recommendations of ending activities used when presenting the content.

Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction.		
Theory	Ending Activities	Sample activity
Activate Retrieval	1. Assessing Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Test of new knowledge and skills presented. b. Learner produces alternatives to those presented. c. Learner constructs summary of new information.
Provide cues	2. Enhancing retention and learning transfer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Hand out job aides relevant to the topic. e. Learners adopt new set of authentic examples. f. Recommend knowledge and skills required to succeed.
<p>Figure 3. Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction. From: <i>Instructional design: The ADDIE approach.</i> by Branch, R.M. (2009), New York, NY: Springer. Reprinted with permission.</p>		

The ending activities presented in Figure 3 constitute viable options for obtaining closure of the day's learning events. However, adapting the following questions to the lesson activity

stimulates reflective thinking and creates opportunities for the tutor-trainee to collaborate on their experiences.

- Describe what you learned today?
- How does today's lesson affect your understanding of being a reading tutor?
- Summarize today's lesson for someone who wasn't here.
- Describe the most significant thing you learned today.
- Describe the most difficult concept from today's lesson.
- What should I review further in our next lesson?

It is reasonable to expect that attendees to tutor training will begin their experience with a different set of expectations and understandings related to training than the collegiate pre-service education undergraduate. Attendees to tutor training who are older in age will present greater differences regarding their academic backgrounds, learning styles, motivation, and interests. Therefore, a greater emphasis on individualization of teaching methods and overall differentiation should be designed to maximize the learning opportunity.

References

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Lindeman. E.C. (1926). Andragogik: The method of teaching adults. *Workers' Education*, 4, 1926a, 38.