

Assessing main Characteristics of Adult learning

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Abstract: Successful adult education programs recognize that adult learner needs and learning styles may require non-traditional methods of teaching and accommodate them whenever possible. This means holding classes and sessions outside of typical working hours for adults that work, providing one-on-one tutoring, group classes, and other methods of delivering services that are flexible. It is also important to hold the classes where it is convenient for adult learners to attend, such as local houses of worship, residential facilities, libraries, or other community centers. Understanding this key principle is difficult sometimes for organizations that have worked in child education, but not in adult education. Congregations that have held learning programs for children may feel that they are suited to take on adult education without realizing the differences in program structure and content. It is important that congregations research training opportunities before embarking on an adult education program.

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Introduction:

The field of adult education and literacy is plagued by confusion about definitions. Over the years definitions have evolved from provisions in federal law and initiatives of groups advocating particular methodologies or the needs of specific adult populations. The result is that definitions tend to merge statements about the goals to be achieved (e.g., improving the literacy of a particular population) with a particular means (e.g., adult basic education) to achieve the goal.

Therefore, it is helpful to distinguish between at least these dimensions of the issue:

1. "Literacy" refers to the knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals. The federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of the Workforce Investment Act) defines literacy as "an individual's ability to read, write, speak in English, compute and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society." Literacy is often defined in terms of specific domains such as "basic academic skills," "workplace skills," "life skills," "parenting skills," or skills

necessary to exercise one's rights and responsibilities for citizenship. Different dimensions of literacy are often categorized by terms that cluster several dimensions of literacy important for different clients. Examples include workplace literacy (combining both basic academic skills and workplace skills), and

family literacy (combining basic academic skills and other skills essential for successful parenting).

2. "Education attainment" usually refers to the numbers of years of schooling completed or the level of credential (e.g., high school diploma or associate degree) an individual has obtained. Despite concerns about the meaning of credentials, there is a strong correlation between educational attainment and literacy.

3. "Literacy initiatives" often are defined in terms of the needs of a particular target group. These may be parents of young children, youth who have dropped out of high school without earning a high school diploma, welfare recipients, persons with limited English-speaking ability, incarcerated adults, or adults in the workforce.

4. Other literacy initiatives are defined in terms of a particular educational service, strategy, or means to address a target population's literacy problems. "Adult basic education" and "family literacy" are examples. These initiatives are often defined in terms of a particular configuration of services for the target population (e.g., assessment and information and counseling services).

5. The term "lifelong learning" is often associated with "literacy." Lifelong learning is a means to the goal of maintaining necessary levels of literacy throughout one's lifetime. The goal of lifelong learning has implications for both individual adult's learning behavior as well as education policy and the design of the education system.

Goal six of the National Education Goals illustrates a broadly stated goal that incorporates expectations about both adult literacy and the kinds of policies and services that should be in place to improve literacy. Goal six, "Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning," states that, "By the year 2000, every adult will be literate and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship." The objectives related to this goal touch on several of the common elements of definitions listed above, for example:

- Different dimensions of literacy (e.g., academic and workplace skills),
- The level of education attainment (e.g., increasing the number of persons who complete postsecondary degrees),
- The needs of target groups (e.g., parents, minorities, or part-time learners),
- The need to increase the availability of particular educational services, strategies or means (e.g., accessibility of libraries to part-time learners or opportunities for parental involvement), and
- The importance of lifelong learning, both in the learning behavior of individuals and in the educational system's responsiveness to the needs of adult learners.

Concept of adult education:

Several definitions of adult education has been done Community

- Adult Education is a]in the following examples are given of them. conscious effort by public institutions or voluntary organizations to promote community awareness comes action.
- adult education teaching is typically specific age group above the legal age] limits as formal and informal, voluntary and at different levels of time, place
- Adult Education is a process in which people who]and education is presented. somehow been cut course they consciously to change or advance their skills in information and do organized activities.
- Adult education includes all formal and informal training and volunteer after] school, which by experienced educators and aware of the system.

Educational materials on adult education with daily life, needs, goals, aspirations and past experiences of adults and their relationship helps to results learned in life and career are used.

Adult characteristics:

to understand the characteristics of adult learners, their mental and physical condition should be considered in the following referred to some of them.

Operating speed:

slow reaction in adults is natural that necessarily means reducing the logic and practice skills, not due to weakness and increased awareness of natural forces and their skills.

Consciousness:

no stimulus and incentives encouraging, despite inhibiting stimuli, slow transfer rate, mental, and weak inhibitors of natural forces (mostly visual and auditory) are factors that slow reaction affect individual mental and cognitive activities, but never able to understand, understanding and learning ability (which varies with the speed of learning) is not relevant.

Health:

what is most age, longer duration is necessary to be heard by listening issue. Why is that when elderly people and old could not hear well, their confidence and vulnerable to the possibility that negative beliefs about their find, they are great. Visual abilities can be like other people, usually decreases with age.

Background of knowledge - skills and beliefs of adults:

adults, social experiences, many have already learned different values and beliefs in their pronouns have stabilized, so changes in the new act very cautiously. The idea of such a manner that skill and applying them older and longer life is, Similar resistance to accept new ideas will be more and more severe. Thus, the adult criteria for the built and paid for their ideas and beliefs that are forming. Because of these criteria and the beliefs that they are afraid of failure, Therefore, to prevent it, sometimes against the resistance of new phenomena are only the material taught and its face that make reinforced concrete and tangible interference situation is.

Characteristics of adult education:

flexibility in time:

In the past, usually one of the obstacles in the way of learning and development of adult education was being inflexible and time courses were programs. But now most countries have to consider that the speed limit of time and learning ability and facilities must be adults. Flexibility in time means that not only should the time classes and programs for adults is appropriate, but necessary facilities should be provided for independent study.

Flexibility in the location:

One of the aspects of flexible space is that individuals can, regardless of their residence to the study and advancing their knowledge and skills pay. For example, adults in remote villages should like people who live in the city use of educational programs. After flexibility in other places is that the issue of specificity of location is not considered primarily educational.

Flexibility in age:

Educational opportunities for certain age should not use it for all regardless of their age, is possible. In fact, educational programs must use people of different ages to prepare.

Flexibility in admission:

No adult should not only be deprived of education because of the necessary conditions for admission in the class does. Of course this is not such a person without academic records to participate in university classes is accepted, Adoption order is that the adults in educational programs at different levels, according to the possibility of using the opportunity that is provided must be based on the experience and knowledge and their knowledge is.

To combine education and job responsibilities:

Adults should be able to work during that time engaged in training classes take them. In other words, their presence in the class should be considered part of their work. This means that low-literate or illiterate working people who are allowed to work an hour of your daily spending surpassed participation in educational programs.

Issues Beyond the Department of Adult Education and Literacy

Beyond the issues relating directly to DAEL(Department of Adult Education and Literacy), the task force heard a number of concerns about the Commonwealth's overall approach to adult literacy.

- Lack of coherent statewide leadership and coordination among multiple complementary initiatives aimed at the same problem.
- Lack of continuity in state leadership. Cited in particular was the difficulty sustaining a high level commitment to the issue long enough to make a difference because of changes in priorities of the state's political leaders. A high level of turnover in the leadership of the Department of Adult Education and Literacy has also contributed to the instability.
- Tendency to think of adult education as a separate categorical program rather than a strategy that cuts across the mission and responsibility of multiple Commonwealth

programs and initiatives (e.g., early childhood education, welfare reform, economic development, and corrections).

- Multiple uncoordinated categorical federal initiatives that tend to drive (and fragment) policy for an overall state effort that is largely funded by Kentucky.
- A tendency to commingle and confuse different functions. The most important distinction is between functions focused on the needs of clients (adult learners, employers, communities, regions, and the Commonwealth as a whole) and functions associated with the operations and performance of providers. It is important that each of these functions receive attention, yet the tendency is for one (e.g., overseeing a network of providers) to drive out attention to overall system strategy.
- Inadequate coordination of services to meet the needs of individual adults, communities, employers, and regions is hindered by:
 - Vertical financing and regulatory relationships between separate federal and state programs and local providers and administrative units. These vertical relationships can hinder the horizontal coordination of services for individual adult learners, communities, and employers.
 - Turf wars among providers, local politics, and long-standing conflicts among neighboring counties.
 - Inadequate links with and leverage of other public and private initiatives and investments to reach the target population. Major sources of help include employers, postsecondary education, and workforce development.
 - Lack of a state financing policy and strategy for provider performance incentives and collaboration, and tax and other employer incentives for leverage of non-state resources.
 - Lack of programmatic and administrative flexibility to meet the rapidly changing needs of adult learners, employers, regional economies, and communities.

Key Characteristics of Adult Education and Literacy Programs

1- Staffing:

Successful adult education programs have staff members who are committed to adult learners and know how to make the most of available resources with limited budgets. Staff must be flexible and work hours that are more convenient to adult learners.

Additionally, staff must be trained in principles of adult education and should attend professional development courses.

2- Volunteers:

Volunteers are critical to the success of adult education programs, as they often provide valuable one-on-one tutoring sessions with adult learners outside of a formal classroom. Volunteers must be trained in principles of adult education and literacy programs, as well as methods to monitor their learners' progress. Having a volunteer coordinator is important, as this person trains the volunteers and serves as their point of contact during the tutoring sessions. If volunteers need advice on how to work with their partners or need new materials to cover during their sessions, a volunteer coordinator is an invaluable resource. Without a coordinator, volunteer retention would be very low. It is important that learners be paired with volunteers for a certain period of time, as it is difficult for adult learners to make progress if their tutor partner changes constantly. Clear expectations should be established for how often and how long tutors will meet with their learners. Congregations often can serve adult learners through tutoring programs, as congregations have easy access to a steady stream of volunteers. It may be easier for congregations to operate an informal tutoring program versus a comprehensive adult education program, since those programs need a higher level of staffing.

3- Respect for adult learners:

A distinguishing characteristic of adult education programs is that program content and language must be suitable and respectful of adult clients. For example, instead of using the word "student" which may imply a traditional teacher/student relationship where a student is subservient to the teacher, all state program materials use the word "learner" or "customer." Using this type of language acknowledges the adults' existing knowledge and real-world experience and makes them the focus of the program. The Pennsylvania Adult Basic and Literacy Education Indicators of Program Quality emphasize the importance of customer satisfaction and learner progress on individualized goals (see Appendix A). One quality area explicitly states that "program staff and learners jointly develop, regularly evaluate, and update an instructional plan that incorporates the individual's learning styles and preferences" (p.7). This is just one example of how learners and staff are equals and collaborate on the learners' participation in the program.

Successful adult education programs recognize that adult learner needs and learning styles may require non-traditional methods of teaching and accommodate them whenever possible. This means

holding classes and sessions outside of typical working hours for adults that work, providing one-on-one tutoring, group classes, and other methods of delivering services that are flexible. It is also important to hold the classes where it is convenient for adult learners to attend, such as local houses of worship, residential facilities, libraries, or other community centers. Understanding this key principle is difficult sometimes for organizations that have worked in child education, but not in adult education. Congregations that have held learning programs for children may feel that they are suited to take on adult education without realizing the differences in program structure and content. It is important that congregations research training opportunities before embarking on an adult education program.

4- Practical program content:

Related to the program quality area of "respecting adult learners," curriculum should be practical and relevant to the individual learner's goals. Many adult learners are interested in advancing their careers, starting a new career, transitioning into post-secondary school, or attending other educational or training programs. Program content should help learners work on their personal educational or vocational goals. Materials from their current or future job can be utilized as part of the curriculum to make it hands-on and practical for the older learner. Some programs that have provided educational programs for children may have learning materials and textbooks that they think they can use with older learners. However, this is not an effective way to teach adults and participants may be turned off from a program that uses children's books for their teaching materials.

5- Assessment and evaluation:

To have an effective adult learning program and demonstrate program success, learners' progress must be monitored during their participation. There are many official assessments that state funded programs use for standard programs, such as the adult diploma program or GED classes. However, informal measures should also be used to monitor learners' progress and help learners' view their improvement. Seeing concrete improvement over time is important to keeping learners motivated and committed to the program.

6- Space:

The learning environment where an adult education program takes place should be well-lit, clean, and suitable for adults. Additionally, having computers available is useful for learners and staff to access online resources. Many learners want to improve their computer literacy as well as language or numerical literacy, so having a computer lab is valuable.

7- Community relationships:

It is important for adult learning programs to have working relationships with libraries, local businesses, work-ready programs, and other community resources. Since many learners attend adult education programs to advance their career goals, it is important that programs be able to refer them to job readiness or placement organizations. Libraries are also a valuable resource for organizations that are looking for materials that are appropriate for adult literacy programs. The Philadelphia Free Library has a program called the "Reader Development Program" which gives away two free library books a year to adult learners who have a library card.⁴ Books cover topics such as reading, writing, math, job skills, parenting, biography, fiction, GED and ESL. Program staff can also access these books for their own classes.

Conclusion:

In traditional programs that the principles of psychology and curriculum planning, less attention is the form of content presentation ie codification and providing books, original format and have the dominant form, while for adult content that could have valuable experience in addition to writing, other ways also be provided Affect the selection of pictures and images related to the concepts and content produced by including them. Learning activities such as activities outside the classroom, dialogue, role playing and ... Another type of content is presented. Duties are placed on the learner, a resource for developing knowledge, skills and insights he considered.

Curriculum content only from the training provided to learners or not, but put together their learning through activities that can inform or does, skills and attitude to achieve. In this case, apart from learning that the assays taught learners directly to sustainable and effective learning occurs in his.

Another way of providing content that is educational activities outside the learning environment possible for learning more and better enables adult learners. For example, hits, field trip experiences for learners or transfer is provided, develop knowledge, insight and skills they will.

To ensure that science curriculum and educational aspects, according to community needs and audiences, application form is provided or not, the content selection criteria should be considered. These criteria is being include knowledge, effectiveness, flexibility, diversity, relevance and practical learning The task force's policy recommendations are guided by these principles:

- Shift from an emphasis on programs and pilots to a focus on systemic impact on adult literacy in all counties of the Commonwealth.
- Focus on all adults who are in need of significant improvement in their knowledge and skills to be full participants in Kentucky's workforce and society, to develop and maintain healthy families, and to continue their education and training as necessary throughout their lifetimes.
- recognize multiple dimensions of the issue and, consequently, the importance and efficacy of multiple, separate but coordinated strategies aimed at the needs of different target populations, including, but not limited to:
 - Parents of young children.
 - Adults in the workforce, including those with secondary education credentials, for basic literacy and workplace skills and for retraining and upgrading of knowledge, skills, and competencies.
 - Youth from 16 to 18 who drop out of school or are not well served by traditional secondary programs.
 - Adults with significant learning disabilities that limit their ability to take advantage of further education and training.
 - Adults with limited English language literacy.
 - Incarcerated adults.
 - Adults whose access to further education is severely restricted by geography, transportation, technology, and other economic and social barriers.
 - All Kentucky adults who will need lifelong learning opportunities from basic literacy through postsecondary education to succeed in the changing society and economy.
- Emphasize both continuity and development of basic human and physical assets to provide services as well as performance in serving client, community, and Commonwealth needs and priorities.
- Recognize the current and traditional roles and strengths of public schools, postsecondary institutions, employers, and other providers; as a corollary, avoid assigning to key players responsibilities that are inconsistent with their strengths.

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