

Learning To Listen Learning To Teach- Jane Vella

“Adult learning is best achieved in dialogue”

Twelve Principles of Effective Adult learning

Principle 1: Needs Assessment

1. **Who** needed **what** as defined by **whom**.
2. How can we discover what the group really needs to learn, what they already know, what aspects of the course that we have designed really fit their situations.
3. The first question to be answered is **Who: Who** are these learners?
4. **What** is the problem that calls for this course.
5. **When**-it must be convenient for the unique group.
6. **Where**-an environment that is safe for all and has room for small-group work.
7. **What for**- is the question we use to set achievement based objectives.
8. The sequence in the objectives is related to the sequence in the task and each should reinforce the previous learning.
9. The principles of immediacy and accountability oblige us to take the raw content of concept, skills, and attitudes and weave it into a useful set for this particular group.
10. The content we decide to teach relates directly to the achievement-based objectives.
 - a. **What for** is represented by verbs.
 - b. **What** is represented by nouns that are in some way a repetition of the objectives.
 - c. **The How** is the action program-a set of sequenced learning tasks through which the people will use the concepts they are learning.
11. The teachers role is to prepare the design through our comprehensive use of the Seven Steps of Planning and to set tasks in careful sequence.
12. Our task is to collate and organize the responses of the groups when their tasks are completed.
13. **Evaluation**
 - a. What was most useful to you in this program?
 - b. What would you suggest we change?
 - c. Must have long-range evaluation some time after the event.
 - d. Examine how learners are using the skills, knowledge, and attitudes learned in the course.
14. Seven Steps of Planning
 - a. **Who**
 - b. **Why**
 - c. **When**
 - d. **Where**
 - e. **What For**
 - f. **What**
 - g. **How**
15. Adults learn
 - a. When they feel respected
 - b. When the new learning is related to their life experience
 - c. When the new learning has some immediate usefulness to them.
16. They learn:
 - a. 20% of what they hear
 - b. 40% of what they hear and see
 - c. 80% of what they do or discover for themselves.

17. Respect is the most important variable in adult learning.

Principle 2: Safety

1. Trust in the competence of the design as well as the teacher enables the learners to feel safe.
2. Trust in the feasibility of the objectives and in their relevance make the learners feel safe.
3. Allowing small groups to find their voices enhances the possibility of safety.
4. Trust in the sequence of activities builds safety.
5. Realization that the environment is nonjudgmental assures safety.
6. Six considerations for adult learning and teaching:
 - a. *Political*-it has to do with power and the distribution of power both in the process and the content selected.
 - b. *Problem-posing*- it is a dialogue around adult themes using adult materials evoking affective, psychomotor, and cognitive responses.
 - c. *Part of a whole*- it must have follow-up and continuity and not be a single event raising and then dashing hopes.
 - d. *Participative*- everyone involved will have time to speak, to listen, to be actively engaged in the learning.
 - e. *Person-centered*- its purpose is the development of all the people involved, not merely the covering of the content.
 - f. *Prepared*- from the initial needs assessment through the use of the Seven Steps of Planning, through the design of materials, the learning is designed for this particular group of learners and time is used lavishly to make it ready.

Principle 3: Sound Relationships:

1. The relationship between the instructor and the learner is the most important factor in the learning process.
2. Only the student can name the moment of the death of the professor, but the professor has to welcome that moment in order to surely die as professor.
3. The relationship of mentor to adult learner is productive of learning. Within that relationship, the variables we can control are time, affirmation, mutual respect, open dialogue, open questions that invite dialogue, engagement in significant work, role clarification, responsibility, and immediate response to questions and issues that are raised.
4. Without the ability to not intrude, to wait, to be patient, to be on call, accessible as a resource, the professor cannot be a catalyst for quality learning.
5. Nonjudgmental discussion, like open dialogue, is not easy to design and implement.
6. Learners learned only when they were actively engaged, whether cognitively, affectively, or physically.
7. How to honor immediacy:
 - a. Set the norm that any question that arises has priority over the task at hand. One can say, "before I respond what do you think of her question?"
 - b. Structured time can be set before and after a session so that immediate concerns can be dealt with in dialogue.
 - c. The onus is on the teacher to respond as quickly as possible to a question, otherwise they will not ask again.
 - d.

Principle 4: Sequence and Reinforcement

1. Reinforcement means the repetition of facts, skills, and attitudes in diverse, engaging, and interesting ways until they are learned.
2. In adult learning, accountability is mutual.
3. Sequence means to begin at the beginning: move from small to big, slow to fast, easy to hard.
4. Design challenges:
 - a. Examine a class or workshop for the occasions of reinforcement of your primary concept, skill, or attitude.
 - b. A principle is the beginning of an action.
 - c. The size of a group is directly related to the potential for effective reinforcement and the quality of sequence.
 - d. There must be humor and rhythm in adult learning.

Principle 5: Praxis

1. Praxis-action with reflection.
2. Praxis is action-with-reflection which is a natural way of learning. It is a special kind of action, full of reflection, leading to new, refined action.
3. Praxis can be used in teaching knowledge, skills, and attitudes as learners do something with the new knowledge, practice the new skills and attitudes, and then reflect on what they have just done.
4. Open questions to encourage praxis:
 - a. What do you see happening here? (description)
 - b. Why do you think it is happening? (analysis)
 - c. When it happens in your situation, what problems does it cause? (application)
 - d. What can we do about it? (implementation)
5. It is the teacher's responsibility to set training objectives very clearly and explicitly for participants before the training begins and then, in honest dialogue, ask them what they want to do in light of these objectives.
6. The dialogue begins by design when we invite these expectations.

Principle 6: Respect for Learners

1. Regarding learners as subjects of their learning.
2. The teacher must distinguish between suggestions – a consultative voice, and decisions-a deliberative voice.
3. Don't ever do what the learner can do; don't ever decide what the learner can decide.
4. Let your learners be subjects-decision makers-rather than an object at the disposal of others.
5. Subjects are decision-makers.
6. Begin with experience, analyze that experience, search for new information that can inform that experience, then change our knowledge set or behavior to incorporate the new data.
7. Training is only as good as it is accountable.
8. The participants must be able to demonstrate their grasp of ideas and skills.
9. In a mixed group-aim at the younger learners and let the more knowledgeable ones help them as facilitators.
10. Questions to use for planning:
By the end of this course:
 - a. I hope to have learned...
 - b. I hope to have practiced...

- c. The most critical problem facing villagers in my area is...
- 11. When people see that you are listening, and that they are indeed decision makers with you, their motivation changes dramatically.
- 12. After reviewing achievement-based objectives we must ask:
 - a. What is missing among the objectives?
 - b. What is not necessary or irrelevant from your perspective?
 - c. What three objectives are most important to you in your job?
- 13. A major principle for motivating: *Advice or praise from a peer carries more weight than advice, correction, or praise from an outsider or a manager.*
- 14. Open questions to use in evaluating a situation:
 - a. What do you see happening here?
 - b. Why do you think it is happening?
 - c. When it happens in your life, what problems does it cause?
 - d. What do you think we can do about it?
- 15. Principles of adult education:
 - a. Safety
 - b. Clarity of task
 - c. Appropriate time
 - d. Respect for the product and the producer
 - e. Lavish affirmation
- 16. Only people who have practice in acting as subjects of their own lives can take responsibility for programs and resources and hand over control to others.
- 17. Don't tell what you can ask. Don't ask if you know the answer; tell in dialogue.
- 18. Learning is more effective when it is active rather than passive.

Principle 7: Ideas, Feelings, Actions

- 1. There are three aspects of learning- ideas (cognitive), feelings (affective), and actions (psychomotor).
- 2. Most learning involves more than cognitive material (ideas and concepts). It involves feeling something about the concepts (emotions) and doing something (action).
- 3. The more we integrate all three elements, the more critical the learners will be about the concept's significance and the better the concept is integrated into their real lives.
- 4.

Principle 8: Immediacy

- 1. Adult learners need to see the immediate usefulness of new learning; the skills, knowledge, or attitudes they are working to acquire.
- 2. At the end of each learning session ask: how can you use this new skill most effectively?
- 3. A paradox: the more structure the more chance of spontaneity.
- 4. The problem-posing approach (where you work through dialogue) is respect for the learners and their immediate needs.
- 5. Adults learn by doing so design opportunities for doing, using new knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Principle 9: Clear Roles

- 1. It is important to recognize the power of clear roles in the communication between learner and teacher.
- 2. If the teacher's role does not lend itself to dialogue, learners will not seek her out.

3. Commitment to a role that moves everyone toward dialogue, implies that there is time for dialogue both inside and outside the classroom.
4. List their hopes and fears for the workshop.
5. We find it hard to accept that education is more than the sharing of facts and concepts.

Principle 10: Teamwork

1. An optimal field is one designed for everyone to gain as much as possible-where we design for a win/win situation.
2. Try to have people choose their own teams as often as possible.
3. At times, gender, race, or age are serious considerations.
4. When setting team tasks use open questions, one that you don't know the answer to.
5. A learning task is an open question put to a small group with the resources they need to respond to it.

Principle 11: Engagement

1. When learners are deeply engaged, working in small groups or teams, it is often difficult to extricate them from the delight of that learning.
2. Without engagement there is no learning.

Principle 12: Accountability

1. Accountability is one of the foremost principles of adult learning.
2. The design of learning events must be accountable to the learners.
3. What was proposed to be taught must be taught; what was meant to be learned must be learned; the skills intended to be gained must be manifest to all the learners; the attitudes taught must be manifest; the knowledge conveyed must be visible in adult learners' language and reasoning.
4. A paradigm shift will only occur when the present pattern has proven itself ineffective and impossible to live with.