

6 TIPS FOR TEACHING BASED ON PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING THEORY

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- The average age of CSUF students is 23.39 years (Fall 2015).
- We have many adult reentry students.
- Principles of adult learning theory overlap with principles of effective instruction generally.

WHAT TO DO IN CLASS

Address adult learners' desire to know why they should learn something.

- Bring out the personal benefits of learning.
 - Have students write personal goals and action plans.
1. Make learning practical and relevant.
 - Make class time more task-centered than subject- or content-centered.
 - Provide authentic learning experiences.
 - Provide immediate real-world applications.
 2. Use active participation in class, as part of a varied set of teaching methods.
 - Make social interaction part of the learning process.
 - Tap into adults' interest in solving problems, especially practical ones.
 - Provide structured opportunities for them to talk and reflect in class.
 - Make touch and movement part of the learning process to aid the many kinesthetic adult learners.
 3. Use adult learners' previous experiences and knowledge effectively.
 - Prompt them to relate their life experiences to what they are learning now.
 - Provide opportunities for them to integrate new knowledge with their existing knowledge.
 - Acknowledge their experiences to address adult learners' desire to be respected.
 4. Tap into adults' desires to direct and have responsibility for their own learning.
 - Incorporate self-assessments.
 - Provide choices when creating assignments, selecting readings, etc.
 5. Adapt your expectations and policies to adult learners' busy lives.
 - Divide instructional presentations and assignments into segments.
 - Provide ample time to complete work prior to deadlines.
 - Don't require the use of resources that are only available during narrow time windows.

HOW TO LEARN MORE

Learn more about [Malcom Knowles' work on adult learning theory](#).