

Adult Learning Principles

Adult learning is a process of self-directed inquiry. Adult learners bring a greater skill set with varied professional and educational experience. Previous successes and failures may color the student's learning style, which can create a more engaging learning process or at times bring biases that block a student's learning. Educators can facilitate the learning experience through reflective conversation.

Characteristics of an adult learner:

- Autonomous and self-directed.
- Has accumulated a foundation of experience and knowledge.
- Goal oriented.
- Relevancy oriented.
- Practical.
- Wants to be shown respect.

Adult Learning Styles

Assessing a student's learning style is a fundamental step before engaging in an educational activity. Understanding a student's learning preference and using examples of previous success is a way to create a productive educational experience.

Barriers to learning may be lack of confidence, motivation, and time. The lack of an emotional connection to a student is a challenging barrier to overcome. A teacher who makes a student believe in their abilities and knowledge as a new provider can create a greater emotional connection and impact a student's continued success and growth.

Although each student has a specific preferred learning style, adults learn best when there is a combination of: **visual**, **auditory**, and **kinesthetic** learning available.

Using all three learning styles helps students retain information and recite from a more dynamic learning experience. Students learn their clinical skills through guidance, support, and ultimately by doing. The more the adult learner participates in the skill, the greater their confidence and autonomy will be over the course of their clinical experience.

Visual

- Use models, videos (such as YouTube), and observation.
- Walk through a visual exercise of how a procedure or patient interaction would unfold.
- Provide documentation forms, coding information, and patient educational materials.

Auditory

- Rephrase questions or specific learning objectives in different ways.
- Vary the pitch and speed of your voice to create cues.
- Write down points before verbal discussion.

Kinesthetic

- Have students physically move while reciting information.
 - Have students touch equipment because motor memory will enhance cognition.

– Cuellar, L. M., & Ginsburg, B. D. (2016). *Preceptor's handbook for pharmacists* (3rd ed.). Bethesda, MD: Springer Publishing.

– Malcolm Knowles *Characteristics of adult learners*. Retrieved from http://www.txprofdev.org/apps/onlineteaching/time/Adult_Learners.pdf

– Russell, S. S. (2006). An overview of adult-learning processes. *Urologic Nursing*, 26(5), 349–370.