POLICY: HR-XII-3
DEPARTMENT: Human Resources
CATEGORY: Training and Development
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 2021
SUPERSEDES VERSION DATED: July 2003
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Policy & Procedure Manual

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT – HR-XII-3

POLICY:

Human Resources shall have predetermined goals and objectives that are consistent with the principles of adult learning (Appendix).

PURPOSE:

To ensure that program development is directed by identified goals and objectives and is respectful of the participants' experience and learning ability.

PROCEDURE:

The Human Resources and Training Advisor shall ensure that each presenter/speaker/instructor is familiar with the principles of adult learning. (Appendix)

1.   The presenter/speaker/instructor shall establish measurable goals and objectives for each program.

2.   The presenter/speaker/instructor, in conjunction with the Human Resources and Training Advisor, shall ensure that a program evaluation is completed and that adaptations are incorporated into the program in accordance with the Program Evaluation Policy and Procedure.

RECOMMENDED BY: Director, Human Resources   **APPENDICES:** 1

OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Community Services (all)

ORIGINAL POLICY DATE: June 1994

AUTHORIZED BY: Executive Director   **SIGNATURE:** _____

PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING

1.   Learning depends on motivation, and the desire to learn must come from within the learner. To the extent that the learning experience meets the needs of the learner to deal with specific events, it will be successful.
      Learning must be learner-centered, and help the learner deal with specific situations that are a cause for concern.

2.   Individuals have different learning styles, and capacities to learn, as well as being at different stages in life.
      A variety of techniques should be incorporated into the learning atmosphere. Concepts should be introduced one at a time, with plenty of opportunities for summary and review.

3.   The adult's orientation to learning is life centred. Learning programs will be more effective if they tap into and build on the past and current experiences of the learner.
      Adults need to be able to integrate new ideas with what they already know if they are going to keep and use the new information. Open ended questions to draw out information will be helpful. Past experience must be acknowledged and used. Information that conflicts with what is already held to be true is integrated more slowly, so more time will have to be given to this type of material.

4.   Adults prefer to be actively involved in the learning experience.
      Adults should have input into the learning process, contents and objectives. Programs that allow self pacing are more effective than those that do not.

5.   Learning is enhanced by direct experience with new concepts, which allows practice and problem solving.
      Relevant exercises must be built in to the learning experience. Adults learn better in a situation where practical application is available, and ideas for on the job application are available. Learning is augmented by novelty, variety and challenge.

6.   Learning effectiveness is dependent upon feedback.
      Adults need to know how well they are doing. They need to know they are on the right track, and what additional skills are needed. At the same time, self esteem and ego are at risk and adults carry bad experiences and other influencing factors into the classroom. Feedback must be both constructive and ego conserving at the same time.

7.   Learning is enhanced by an informal atmosphere and the freedom to make mistakes.
      There should be no embarrassment, but an atmosphere that encourages questions and provides the opportunities to try out new skills. The learning environment must be physically and psychologically comfortable.

Incorporate principles of adult learning into your work

These six principles of adult learning, paraphrased from the work of Malcolm Knowles and other adult education specialists, can help you focus on how best to present information to the people you are training.

1. Adult learners are motivated and self-directed.
- They learn most effectively when they have a strong inner motivation, such as a desire for improved personal circumstances, to develop a new skill, or to gain a particular type of knowledge.
    - **tip:** set up an environment where learners feel safe expressing themselves
    - **tip:** focus on what is relevant to your participants

2. Adult learners bring life experience and knowledge.
- They look back to their own experience to find solutions to problems
    - **tip:** help learners draw on their personal experiences when problem-solving
    - **tip:** encourage learners to share a story about a past experience or problem that they have encountered

3. Adult learners are goal-oriented.
- They start with a problem and then work to find a solution.
    - **tip:** provide case studies based on real-life situations
    - **tip:** when presenting information, be flexible and responsive to the needs of your learners

4. Adult learners will learn only what they feel they need to learn.
- They want to know what is relevant to their own situations – "How is this going to help me right now?"
    - **tip:** be practical and direct
    - **tip:** provide time for learners to debrief about the experiences they've had through the training

5. Adult learners are practical.
- They need to be able to use these skills immediately so that they see their relevance.
    - **tip:** ask participants in advance to tell you what is relevant and useful to their work or community

6. Adult learners want guidance and respect.
- They prefer being presented with options rather than being given instructions.
    - **tip:** make sure that your tone is not patronizing
    - **tip:** allow plenty of time for input from the group, and acknowledge their life experience

http://plelearningexchange.ca/toolbox/using-adult-education-principles/

Principles of Adult Learning

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