Principles of Adult Learning

1. Adults see learning as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. They must know what there is to gain and they must see progress being made.

2. Adults want courses that focus on real-life problems and tasks rather than academic material. A strong how-to focus is desired. They become restless if their time is being wasted.

3. Adults are accustomed to being active. They should be given an opportunity for active participation in an instructional setting that is safe, welcoming, and comfortable.

4. Adults bring considerable experience with them. Therefore, they wish to speak, participate, and contribute to the proceedings. They dislike long lectures and one-way communication.

5. Adults have something to lose. They have a strong need to maintain their self-esteem. Therefore, they should be listened to and we should set up the course so they will be successful. Instructors must consult and work with adults rather than be too directive.

6. Adults have a “here and now” viewpoint and wish to focus on current issues rather than material that may be useful in the distant future.

7. Adults are accustomed to being self-directed. They have expectations and wants that need to be met. Instructors must consult and work with adults rather than be too directive.