

Before you begin:

Ask these questions:

1. What are the current training techniques and materials?
2. What is the training goal?
3. Who is being trained?
4. What training resources are available?



Introduction

Training, initial and ongoing, is an essential element in an effective safety and health program system. How is this achieved in the workplace? Since most of the workforce consists of adults, employers should implement fundamental adult education techniques in their training.

There is a significant difference between teaching adults and teaching children. Knowing how adults learn helps trainers become more effective. Employees are most successful when taught in their personal learning style. Training for adult learner combines presentation methods to engage as many of these styles as possible to be effective for a group of diverse employees.

Definitions

Learning Styles refers to the standard way in which adults absorb, process, understand, and remember information.

Discussion

Learning Styles

When training adults, give special consideration to the fact that different people have different learning styles. There are three main learning styles: visual, auditory, and tactile.

- *Visual learners* are best motivated to learn by looking, seeing, viewing, and watching. Visual learners respond well to lessons that use graphs, diagrams, and illustrations. They tend to take detailed notes to absorb information. They can be best communicated with by providing worksheets, utilizing whiteboards, and handing out documents that can be reviewed later.
- *Auditory learners* are best motivated to learn by listening, hearing, and speaking. Auditory learners listen to all sounds associated with the lesson; this applies not just to words, but also to tone. They learn through lectures, discussions, and brainstorming. They can be best communicated with by speaking clearly, asking them direct questions, and utilizing small-group and large-group discussion.
- *Tactile learners* are best motivated to learn by experiencing, moving, and doing. Tactile learners understand best through a hands-on approach and actively participating in the training. They can be best communicated with by involving volunteers and allowing them to practice what they are learning.

Ultimately, a learning style assessment of your audience at the beginning of class can be very beneficial in ensuring that your audience understands the material. Use a combination of these techniques when you don't know the preferred style of your group.

Purpose

In addition to learning style, purpose must also be considered. Compared to children, adult students are more likely to take classes with a desire to learn. Therefore, it is crucial to illustrate why each component of the class you're teaching is an important part of the learning process. You must ensure that your adult students understand why something is important to know or do for it to really stick in their minds.

Experience

Learning is experiential, and experiential learning can take many forms. These forms include small and large group discussion, experiments, role playing, building crafts, or writing/drawing something specific. These activities ultimately keep people energized and get students involved, helping to enhance their learning experience.

Timing

If a student does not want to learn, then they will not. Thankfully, with adult students, they are there because they have chosen this to be a time for them to learn. Take advantage of any opportunity to teach your students, even if it means modifying your itinerary.

Positivity

Adult learners may be especially prone to apprehension when it comes to learning, as they typically have not taken classes in years. Therefore, it is important for you to be positive, encouraging, and patient. Give students plenty of time to answer questions you pose to them and recognize their contributions to the class.

Conclusion

While there are various methods to make training effective, using different learning styles in a training session will improve learning and retaining the information. Each trainer will have their own style of teaching. However, the trainer must know the topic, apply the different learning styles, and create goals for the training.

Group Activity

Separate the group into two teams of three or more employees. Have the first group identify a topic of discussion related to safety within your facility. This group develops leading questions to encourage conversation within a large group activity. They then facilitate a large group discussion on the topic.

Have the second group develop a small group activity related to the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) within your facility. The activity should include elements learned during the presentation. This could include demonstrating how to use, store, and clean PPE or identifying PPE needed for certain tasks. There are no right or wrong activities. The goal is to allow the participants to practice what they have learned.

Resources

[Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Resource for Development and Delivery of Training to Workers](#)

[Principles of Adult Learning and ISD](#)

[How to Captivate and Motivate Adult Learners: A Guide for Instructors Providing In-Person Public Health Training](#)