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## Adult training in home science extension activities

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#### Abstract

Adult learning is a process of stressing and helping the learners to develop a potential of 'how' of thinking rather than 'what' of thinking. It is to make the learners self reliant. It is usually done by utilizing the locally available qualitative resources. It is also solving problems 'of the people by the people'. Extension education via training was first developed for the farmers to solve their agricultural problems. It later extended to homemakers and children of farmers. It was done with an effort to make their life easy at fields and home. Adult learning is defined as 'the entire range of formal, non-formal and informal learning activities which are undertaken by adults after a break since leaving initial education and training, and which results in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills'. Adult learning is the most diverse of the lifelong learning sectors, and national adult learning systems (where these exist) are complex and heterogeneous. Characteristics of Adult Learning are to decide for themselves what is important to be learned. There is a need to validate the information based on their beliefs and experience. They expect their learning to be immediately useful. They have much of experience. They have good 'rapport' with the fellow learners and thus can be of use to the extension agent or the teacher to help disseminate information.

**Keywords:** formal, informal, non- formal.

#### Introduction

Training means extending out to people to help them solve their problems in a desired fashion so as to yield predicted outcomes that either generates money or happiness via any means for the learners. The term "Andragogy" was coined by researchers of adult learning in order to contrast their beliefs about learning to the pedagogical model. Malcolm Knowles first introduced the concept in the US in 1968. The concept of andragogy implies self-directedness and an active student role, as well as solution-centered activities. It was derived from the Greek word "aner" (with the stem andr-) meaning "man, not boy."

A major challenge that confronts most trainers is how to reach across to adults. Various efforts in Adult Learning have so far brought in their wake frustration, anger and even cynicism.

Adults learn contrary to the belief that learning once having taken place is difficult to alter, and learning is the sole preserve of children and adolescents. Adult learning is based on principles and conditions different from the formal set of learning principles. The main differences are as follows:

- Adult learn what is of interest and relevance to them.
- Adult learning is autonomous.
- Adults use personal experience for their learning.
- Adults learn best when the environment is safe, accepting, challenging and supportive.

#### Principles of the adult learning are

##### i) Autonomy and Self-Directed Nature of Learning

Intrinsically motivated students have a desire to achieve and learn for their own purposes while extrinsically motivated students want to impress others. They are actively involved in the learning processes such that they make choices relevant to their learning objectives.

The following examples can be used to help encourage self-directed learning:

- Set up a learning program that moves from more to less structure, from less to more responsibility and from more to less direct supervision, at an appropriate pace that is challenging yet not overloading for the student.
- Establish an environment where students feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves –

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- have open lines of communication, involve all students and encourage group based problem solving.
- Involve learners in mutual planning of the placement experience – be aware of student's previous experiences and discuss goals and expectations at beginning of placement. The use of learning contracts involves the students in diagnosing their own needs, encouraging internal motivation.
- Involve students in evaluating their own learning – this can develop their skills of critical reflection. Use of diaries, reflection journals and problem solving sessions.
- Encourage learners to identify resources and devise strategies for using the resources to achieve their objectives. Ensure students are aware of all resources available at the facility and direct them to use these when there are deficits in theoretical knowledge.

## **ii) Experience**

Generally, adults have a prior experience which helps them to connect with the present learning process and drives them to participate in the activities. It makes learning flexible, participatory and interesting. They try to discover more on the basis of their knowledge and skills. As mentioned earlier, with prior experiences they try to connect the subjects they are learning and discover some more new aspects themselves.

## **iii) Practical Learning**

Adult learners want to know the relevance of what they are learning to what they want to achieve. Learning is more than facts and formulas. It should be conceptual and problem centric. Adults would rather be interested in solving the logic and reason. Adults like to be given the opportunity to use their existing foundation of knowledge and experiences gained throughout their life and apply it to their new learning experiences. They most interests and past experiences (personal, work and study related) and need to keep the facilitate reflective learning opportunities.

## **Extending Respect**

Respect is essential to be demonstrated to the learners to get the same in return. It would be only through respecting that the training would be sincerely understood and dealt with by the learners.

- Provide the venue and time of the training to the learners as to 'where' and 'when' comfortable to them that would help them to devote their attention.
- Taking interest in them.
- Acknowledging the wealth of experiences that the student brings to the placement.
- Promoting thinking amongst them.

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