



Understanding the Adult Learner

Oregon Department of Corrections
Volunteer Program
In-service 2008

This in-service is for every ODOC volunteer!



The material presented in the following slides is designed to help you become more effective in helping the incarcerated learn and use pro-social ideas and behaviors. While the material is written in a way that might make you think it is for teachers, it is for teachers, preachers, 12-step facilitators, life skills instructors, group leaders, etc. The challenge is to continually, as you read through the slides, ask yourself, "how does this apply to me, my program, and the inmates who attend my program." You need to trust that the theory behind the material in this in-service works. You must take the theory and apply it to your situation. If you will do that, the time you spend doing this in-service will prove to be very helpful to you in making a difference in the lives of our inmates.

Training Outcomes



- Construct meaningful learning outcomes for those participating in your program
- Motivate learners to learn
- Overcome adult learning barriers
- Engage learners to develop their learning plan

Constructing Learning

- Learning is affected by:
 - Perspective
 - Beliefs
 - Attitudes
- Learners need to be encouraged to invent their own pro-social solutions and to try out new ideas and pro-social behaviors.



Framework



- Learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current/past knowledge.
 - Instruction must be concerned with the experiences and circumstances that make the learner willing and able to learn (**readiness**)
 - Instruction must be structured so that it can be easily grasped by the learner (**spiral organization**)
 - Instruction should be designed to facilitate extrapolation and or fill in the gaps (**going beyond the information given**)



Learner Centered



- Emphasis must be on the learner rather than the instructor
 - Learner interacts with objects and events
 - Gains an understanding of features, objects, or events
- Teachers, religious leaders, life skills instructors role is not only to observe and assess the inmates, but also to engage with them while they are completing activities

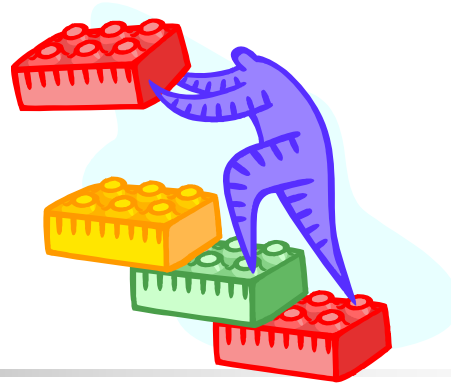


Learner Centered –cont-

- It is valuable to wonder aloud and pose questions to the learner for promotion of reasoning
- Students learn by fitting new information together with what they already know
- Stretch learners through a concept called scaffolding



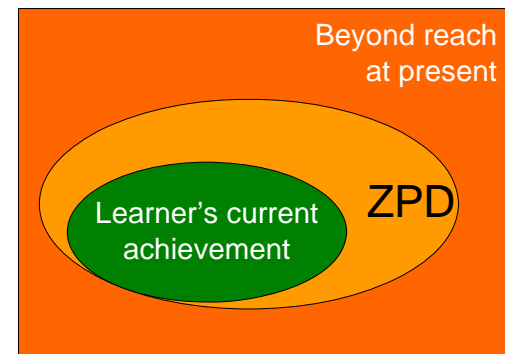
Scaffolding



- Learning comes from a form of building (constructing) knowledge based on prior experience
- The key to “stretching” the learner is to know what is in that person’s “Zone of Proximal Development” – what comes next for them

Zone of Proximal Development

- Constructing skills checklist
 - Draw up three columns:
 - Cannot yet do
 - Can do with help
 - Can do alone
- The ZPD is about “can do with help” not as a permanent state, but as a stage of progression towards learners being able to do something on their own...stretching their ZPD





Learning Styles

- Learners have different learning styles
 - Visual
 - Auditory
 - Kinesthetic\Tactile
- Effective teachers acknowledge that each learner does not learn in the same way
- Teachers must adapt to a variety of learning styles to allow all learners to have the chance to learn in at least one way that matches their inherent learning style

Visual



Visual learners have a preference for seen or observed things, including pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, displays, handouts, films, flip-chart, etc. These people will use phrases such as 'show me', 'let's have a look at that' and will be best able to perform a new task after reading the instructions or watching someone else do it first. These are the people who will work from lists and written directions and instructions.

- Are neat and orderly. Speak quickly
 - Are good long-range planners and organizers
 - Are observant of environmental detail
 - Are appearance-oriented in both dress and presentation
 - Are good spellers and can actually see the words in their minds
 - Remember what was seen, rather than heard
 - Memorize by visual association
 - Usually are not distracted by noise
 - Have trouble remembering verbal instructions unless they are written down and often ask people to repeat themselves
- Are strong, fast readers. Would rather read than be read to
 - Need an overall view and purpose and are cautious until mentally clear about an issue or project
 - Doodle during phone conversations and staff meetings. Like art more than music
 - Forget to relay verbal messages to others. Often answer questions with a simple yes or no
 - Would rather do a demonstration than make a speech
 - Often know what to say but can't think of the right words
 - Sometimes tune out when they mean to pay attention

Auditory



Auditory learners have a preference for the transfer of information through listening: to the spoken word, of self or others, of sounds and noises. These people will use phrases such as 'tell me', 'let's talk it over' and will be best able to perform a new task after listening to instructions from an expert. These are the people who are happy being given spoken instructions over the telephone, and can remember all the words to songs that they hear!

- Talk to themselves while working
 - Are easily distracted by noise
 - Move their lips and pronounce the words as they read
 - Enjoy reading aloud and listening
 - Can repeat back and mimic tone pitch and timbre
 - Find writing difficult, but are better at telling
 - Speak in rhythmic patterns
 - Are frequently eloquent speakers
- Like music more than art
 - Learn by listening, and remember what was discussed rather than seen
 - Are talkative, love discussion, and go into lengthy descriptions
 - Have problems with projects that involve visualization, such as cutting pieces that fit together
 - Can spell better out loud than in writing
 - Like jokes better than comics



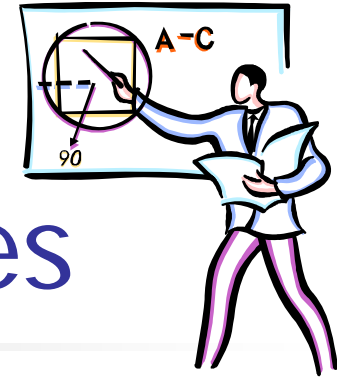
Kinesthetic/Tactile



Kinesthetic/tactile learners have a preference for physical experience - touching, feeling, holding, doing, and practical hands-on experiences. These people will use phrases such as 'let me try', 'how do you feel?' and will be best able to perform a new task by going ahead and trying it out, learning as they go. These are the people who like to experiment, hands-on, and never look at the instructions first!

- Speak slowly
 - Respond to physical rewards
 - Touch people to get their attention
 - Stand close when talking to someone
 - Are physically oriented and move a lot
 - Have early large-muscle development
 - Learn by manipulating and doing
 - Memorize by walking and seeing
 - Use a finger as a pointer when reading
 - Gesture a lot
- Can't sit still for long periods of time
 - Can't remember geography unless they've actually been there
 - Use action words
 - Like plot-oriented books – they reflect action with body movement as they read
 - May have messy handwriting
 - Want to act things out
 - Like involved games

Applying Learning Styles



- Auditory Style
 - Read aloud in class, class discussions, story telling, oral exams, etc. are good tools for teaching the auditory student.

- Visual Style
 - Use PowerPoint, create diagrams, maps and/or posters, watch a documentary on a subject that is being discussed, read literature, etc. Anything that you can see will be beneficial to the student.

- Kinesthetic Style
 - Role playing allows the students to interact with each other as well as create healthier solutions to the problem or situation. Role playing everyday life situations such as a job interview, presenting information to your boss, resolving a problem with your spouse; can all be beneficial to the learning process.



Learning Barriers

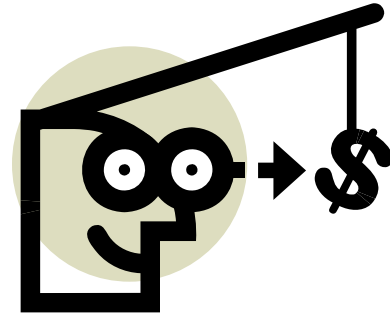


Adults have *barriers against participating in learning*. Many adults have barriers inhibiting their learning.

- What barriers inhibit your learners:
 - Emotional?
 - Lack of skills?
 - Low self-esteem?
 - Lack of confidence, or interest?
 - Lack of information about opportunities to learn?
 - Lack of motivation?



Motivating Factors



- Ability to earn a living on the outside conducive to social acceptance
- Maintain existing skills while learning new skills
- Remain in compliance with their ODOC developed incarceration plan
- Job enrichment
- Interest and selfish benefit (what's in it for them-buy in)



Tips for Effective Teaching

- Remember that learning occurs within each individual as a continual process throughout life.
- People learn at different speeds so it is natural for them to be anxious or nervous when faced with a learning situation.
- Positive reinforcement by the instructor can enhance learning as can proper timing of the instruction.
- Learning results from stimulation of the senses. In some people, one sense is used more than others to learn or recall information.
- Instructors should present materials that stimulate as many senses as possible in order to increase their chances of teaching success.



Critical Elements

- There are four critical elements of learning that must be addressed to ensure that participants learn. These elements are:
 - **Motivation**
 - **Reinforcement**
 - **Retention**
 - **Transference**



Motivation

Instructors can motivate students via several means:

- **Set a feeling or tone for the lesson** - establish a friendly, open atmosphere that shows the learners you will provide assistance.
- **Set an appropriate level of concern.** The level of tension must be adjusted to meet the level of importance of the objective. If the material has a high level of importance, a higher level of tension/stress should be established in the class. However, people learn best under low to moderate stress; if the stress is too high, it becomes a barrier to learning.
- **Set an appropriate level of difficulty.** The degree of difficulty should be set high enough to challenge participants but not so high that they become frustrated by information overload. The instruction should predict and reward participation, culminating in success.



Reinforcement

Encourage correct modes of behavior and performance.

- *Positive reinforcement* is normally used by instructors who are teaching participants new skills. As the name implies, positive reinforcement is "good" and reinforces "good" (or positive) behavior.
- *Redirecting* is useful in trying to change modes of behavior. The desired result is *extinction* -- that is, the instructor uses it until the "bad" behavior disappears, or it becomes extinct.



Retention

- Students must retain information from classes, studies, meetings, worship services, etc., in order to benefit from the learning.
- In order for learners to retain the information taught, they must see a meaning or purpose for that information.
- They must also be able to interpret and apply the information. This understanding includes their ability to assign the correct degree of importance to the material.
- Retention by the learners is directly affected by their amount of practice during the learning.



Transference

The ability to use the information or behavior taught but in a new setting. There are two types of transfer: *positive* and *negative*.

- Positive transference occurs when the participants use the new behavior or information.
- Negative transference occurs when the participants stop doing what they are told not to do. This results in a positive (desired) outcome.

Transference is most likely to occur in the following situations:

- *Association* -- participants can associate the new information with something that they already know.
- *Similarity* -- the information is similar to material that participants already know; that is, it revisits a logical framework or pattern.
- *Degree of original learning* -- participant's degree of original learning was high.
- *Critical attribute element* -- the information learned contains elements that are extremely beneficial (critical) on the job or in their relationships.

Exercise – What are the barriers for your learners?

(Adapted from Chemeketa Community College)

Which of the barriers listed below have interfered with your ability to learn new ideas or behaviors? What additional factors might you add in each section?

Learning is difficult when:

∞ Personal factors interfere with learning:

- Poor Health
- Lack of Confidence
- Unresolved Problems
- Loneliness
- Family Problems
- Social Distractions
- Change in Relationships
- Anxiety
- _____

∞ The learner has problems with what is being taught:

- No interest
- Inadequate Background
- Uncertain about Goals
- New Material Does Not Fit Goals
- Lack of Time to Complete Work
- Burnout
- Unrealistic Goals
- Unavailable When Needed
- Unrealistic Amount of Work Assigned
- _____

Exercise – What are the barriers for your learners? cont

☞ Approach to Learning Does Not Bring Desired Results:

- ❑ Difficulty Concentrating
- ❑ Good Intentions but Poor Follow Through
- ❑ Difficulty Reading/Studying
- ❑ Reading Material Too Difficult
- ❑ Notes Don't Help
- ❑ Unsure About Material
- ❑ Uncertain What is Important
- ❑ Memorization Substituted for Understanding
- ❑ Material Quickly forgotten
- ❑ Unexpected Questions
- ❑ _____

☞ Not Really Sure What Your Commitment Level is:

- ☞ Life Seems to be on Hold
- ☞ Little Interest in the Subject
- ❑ The Material is not what you Expected it to be
- ❑ Negative Emotions (stress, boredom)
- ❑ Other Activities Distract You
- ❑ Learning is Rarely Fun
- ❑ Energy low for Completing Assignments
- ❑ Unsure How the Information Fits Into Your Life
- ❑ _____



Exercise – What are the barriers for your learners? cont

Here is the heart of this exercise: How do you as the teacher, preacher, group leader, meeting facilitator, circle leader, help the inmates remove or lessen these barriers? (This question will appear in the post-test.)



Outcomes vs. Goals

- The terms outcomes, standards, and goals are frequently used interchangeably
- Outcomes describe what students should know and be able to do in particular subject areas.
- Outcomes describe how and at what level students must demonstrate such knowledge and skills (performance based).

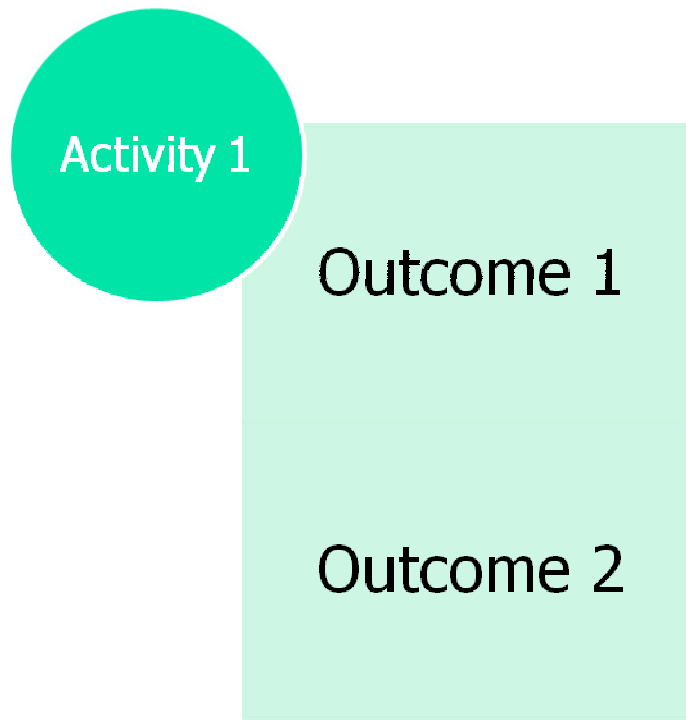
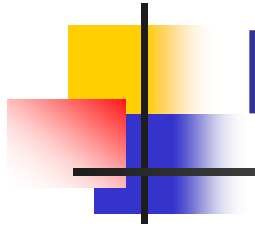


Using Outcomes

Learning outcomes provide direction in the planning of a learning activity. They help to:

- Focus on learner's behavior that is to be changed
- Serve as guidelines for content, instruction, and evaluation
- Identify specifically what should be learned
- Convey to learners exactly what is to be accomplished

Creating Learning Outcomes Matrix





Creating Outcomes

- When writing outcomes, use performance-based action verbs to start each outcome (see next slide for list).
- Examples of performance-based outcomes:
 - Type 20 words per minute
 - Assemble
 - Draw....

Performance-Based Action

Verbs



address	construct	gather	navigate	read	sort
administer	coordinate	generate	negotiate	recommend	summarize
advise	counsel	guide	observe	record	supervise
analyze	create	hypothesize	obtain	recruit	supply
arbitrate	define	illustrate	operate	reduce	symbolize
arrange	diagnose	innovate	perform	research	teach
assemble	deliver	implement	order	repair	synthesize
assess	design	improvise	organize	report	systematize
budge	display	inspect	persuade	resolve	team build
build	dramatize	install	photograph	restore	test
calculate	draw	instruct	pilot	review	train
chart	edit	interpret	play	sing	transcribe
classify	estimate	interview	prepare	schedule	troubleshoot
coach	evaluate	invent	present	select	tutor
collect	examine	investigate	print	show	type
communicate	explain	log	process	sew	umpire
compile	experiment	make	produce	shape	use
complete	paint	manage	program	share	verbalize
compose	file	monitor	purchase	audit	wash
compute	fix	map	question	arrange	weigh
conduct	formulate	motivate	raise	solve	write
express	develop	initiate	sketch	represent	talk

Below are seven criminogenic needs that lead to recidivism. We need to keep them in mind as we set our goals/outcomes and build lesson plans.



Employment

Substance Abuse

Personal/Emotional

Associates

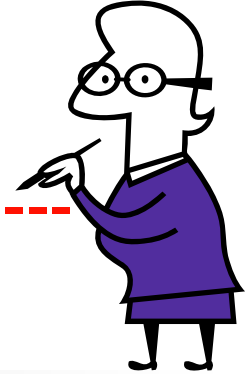
Community Functioning

Marital/Family

Attitudes



Practical Application



- Develop specific learning outcomes for the next three, six months, and year. Try to target one or more Criminogenic need.
- Accommodate the different learning styles and modalities.
- Ask those who participate in your program what they are interested in and create fun exercises and projects!
 - Example: Reading materials, journals, art projects, creative writing opportunities.
- Congratulating each participant on their victories.
 - Reinforce accomplishments.
 - Firm the foundation of their new positive mindset.
 - Lay the groundwork for participant success.
- Set realistic, appropriate, and creative homework assignments.
- Every positive thought/comment brings participants one step closer to leading a successful, happy life.

Closing Thoughts....



- Realize that every classroom, meeting room, or chapel you encounter will be filled with learners who have a variety of learning styles.
- Remember you have a tendency to favor one learning style over the others...usually your own learning style.
- Every learner deserves a learning environment that works for them.
- Work to use a variety of teaching methods to reach out to all the learning styles.
- Use a variety of instructional methods to become a more successful instructor.
- Frustrated learners act out because it isn't working for them.
- The "smart" student is usually the one who has the same learning style as the instructor's teaching style.
- Meet at least quarterly with other volunteers from your organization to share ideas, suggestions, or concerns; evaluate progress towards the goals; it will bring a better outcome.

We have all been in a class where learning was really difficult. It made us feel like something was wrong with us. It was a horrible feeling. We should do whatever we can to reduce that feeling for the inmates we work with.



Outcomes and Lesson Plans

It is critical that you and the group you are part of set program outcomes/goals for what you want to help the inmates accomplish and then develop a lesson plan for each meeting.

The following is a sample of what that might look like. The group is the Church of Wonder and Awesome Amazement. They do a weekly worship service at Possibility Creek Correctional Institution (PCCI)



Outcomes and Lesson Planning Example

Outcomes for the next six months:

1. Teach our doctrine of “You are who you hang with” (focus on associates).
2. Introduce and enroll at least 30 inmates in our correspondence course, Drugs Make Your Breath Stink (focus on substance abuse).
3. Explain the principle of Positive Gut Wrenching (focus on attitudes).
4. Demonstrate our doctrine of a community of one (focus on community).



Outcomes and Lesson Planning Example Continued

At the end of six months, we want the inmates in our program to be able to share the following points with others:

1. Choosing friends carefully
2. Setting healthy boundaries
3. Believe in something that is positive
4. Volunteering makes you happier



Outcomes and Lesson Planning Example Continued

Lesson Plan for the Week of November 9

Topic: The Value of Fleas (if you sleep with wild beasts you will get fleas)

Resources Needed: Chairs for 25 arranged in a circle, overhead projector, piano, and handouts

Participants: Elder Barry as speaker, Sister Act at the piano, Brother Paul Bearer handouts, attendance, changing slides on the overhead, Sister G. Wiz soloist and greeter.

Criminogenic factor addressed: Associates



Outcomes and Lesson Planning Example Continued

Outline of meeting

1. Welcome and Prayer Requests
2. Prayer
3. Song
4. Reading from Holy Book
5. Solo
6. Speaker
 - Form groups of four facing each other
 - Demonstrate a technique for connecting with someone new
 - Have the groups practice the technique
7. Homework Assignment - Use the technique to connect with someone new this week.
8. Closing Words of Encouragement and Prayer



Post Test Exercises

Please print out the following pages and complete the exercises. When complete, please mail the exercise to the address on the last page. Thank you.

You may do the exercise with the other ODOC volunteers in your program. If you do that, please be sure that all of the names of those who participated in completing the exercise are listed so they all get credit for completing the exercise.



Post Test Page 1

How do you as the teacher, preacher, group leader, meeting facilitator, circle leader, help the inmates remove or lessen learning barriers?



Post Test Page 2

Using the program you are part of (Quilting, PF, LDS, 12-step, etc.) and remember to focus on criminogenic factors, complete the following:

Four things I want to accomplish in the next six months

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



Post Test Exercise Page 3

At the end of six months the inmates in my program should be able to articulate, perform, construct, the following (use performance-based action verbs) :

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Topic: _____

Resources needed:

Participants (volunteers):



Criminogenic factor(s) to be addressed:

Outline of Meeting (don't forget learning styles and barriers):



Post Test Exercise Page 6

Lesson Plan

Home work assignment:



Post Test Exercise Page 7

Lesson Plan

Mail this page and completed Post Test Exercises to:

Les Sinclair, CVA
Oregon Department of Corrections
2575 Center Street NE
Salem, OR 97302

For question call: 503-945-2848

I/we certify that I/we have read the module and have completed the post test exercise:

Printed Name _____ **Phone Number** _____ **Facility** _____ **Signature** _____