THE ADULT LEARNER

ADULTS PREFER LEARNING SITUATIONS WHICH:

1. ARE PRACTICAL AND PROBLEM–CENTERED, SO...
   - Give overviews, summaries, examples and use stories
   - Plan for direct application of the new information
   - Include collaborative, problem-solving activities
   - Anticipate problems applying new ideas, offer suggested uses
   ✪ CAUTION: Guard against becoming too theoretical

2. PROMOTE THEIR POSITIVE SELF ESTEEM, SO...
   - Provide low-risk activities in small group settings
   - Plan for building success incrementally
   - Help them become effective and competent
   ✪ CAUTION: Readiness to learn depends on self-esteem

3. INTEGRATE NEW IDEAS WITH EXISTING KNOWLEDGE, SO...
   - Help them recall what they already know that relates to the new ideas
   - Help them see how the new information is relevant to them
   - Plan ways they can share their experience with each other
   ✪ CAUTION: Find ways to assess participant knowledge before an event

4. SHOW RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL LEARNER, SO...
   - Provide for their needs through breaks, snacks, coffee, comfort
   - Provide quality, well-organized experience that uses time effectively
   - Avoid jargon and don’t “talk down” to participants
   - Validate and affirm their knowledge, contributions and successes
   - Ask for feedback on your work or ideas, provide input opportunities
   ✪ CAUTION: Watch your choice of words to avoid negative perceptions

5. CAPITALIZE ON THEIR EXPERIENCE, SO...
   - Don’t ignore what they know, it’s a resource for you
   - Plan alternative activities so you can adjust to fit their experience level
   - Create activities that use their experience and knowledge
   - Listen before, during and after the event
   ✪ CAUTION: Provide for the possibility of a need to unlearn old habits

6. ALLOW CHOICE AND SELF DIRECTION, SO...
   - Build your plans around their needs, compare goals and actual practice
   - Share your agenda and assumptions and ask for input on them
   - Ask what they know about the topic
   - Ask what they would like to know about the topic
   - Build in options within your plan so you can easily shift if needed
   - Suggest follow up ideas and next steps for after the session
   ✪ CAUTION: Match the degree of choice to their level of development