Project: Technical assistance to improve implementation of food safety standards and disease crisis preparedness

1.2.5 (Task 4.2.2) Contribute to increased capacity of staff of the local chamber of commerce, chamber of food professionals, academy and others

Training on Food Associated Risks

SESSION 10: Attitude, skills and knowledge of a professional trainer

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CONTEX

Knowledge, skill and attitude.

Principles of Adult Learning

Components of learning

Roles and responsibilities of a professional trainer

You’re sitting in a workshop, webinar, or conference session. The presenter steps to the microphone, fires up the slide deck, and proceeds to bury you with information. Content, content, and even more content. Because there’s so much to know!

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This impulse comes from a positive place. The teacher has useful knowledge and wants to share it. Indeed, there's seldom enough time to cover everything, which leads to **over-stuffing the presentation**.

In the worst cases, the trainer wants to be seen as the smartest person in the room. How? By talking and talking and talking.

It’s not about what you know

If you facilitate workshops or provide training, consider this: your expertise, while useful, is not the point. Rather, your goal is to equip participants with the tools *to use what they’ve learned* from you.

Classroom teachers think about this a lot. To better engage students, they’ve developed a helpful shortcut for lesson planning and design, using the acronym **KSA.**

KSA.

Knowledge: What do the students *know* as a result of the lesson?

Skills: How can they *implement* what they've learned?

Attitude: How do they *feel* about the material? Do they have the confidence to use it?

Knowledge

- As noted above, the tendency of most trainers is to focus on information: “To be good at _____, here’s what you need to know.” Indeed, they might focus their prep time on content – which slides do I include? – rather than participant engagement and empowerment.

- To be clear: in most training situations, knowledge transfer is essential. However, if participants don’t feel competent (skills) and confident (attitude), then the workshop is a waste of time – because they won’t actually use what they’ve allegedly learned.

Skills

In most cases, the goal of teaching and learning is to change behavior by implementing new knowledge.

If you don’t build skills through practice – and I mean immediately! – much of that new knowledge will be lost.

Attitude

How people *feel* about what they know might be more important than what they know. As a trainer, teacher, consultant, or facilitator, your job is not only sharing knowledge and building skills, but also helping participants develop positive, productive attitudes.

In my experience, without hands-on participation – actively engaging with the material, testing it out, building skills – it's almost impossible to shift attitudes and perspectives. This shift happens through positive messaging from the trainer – "Yes, you can do this!" – and structured, thoughtful opportunities to practice.

Beyond the slide deck

If you work with groups – and you have *lots* of information to share – here's my challenge to you.

How will you help people use that knowledge to build their skills? How will you support the growth of their confidence, fearlessness, forgiveness, and curiosity?

Here's a hint: Step out from behind the slide deck, engage the group, and give them work to do.

Principles of Adult Learning

Up until the mid-twentieth century, educators didn't distinguish between adult and child learners. They taught their material with the same techniques, using the same pedagogy for students of any age group.

This idea began to change in the 1970s, particularly with the work of Malcolm Knowles, a leader in the field of adult education throughout the 20th century. Adult learners are fundamentally different from infant or childhood learners, and they have different needs.

Knowles draws a clear line between the science of teaching children and the methods used for educating adults, which he calls **andragogy.**

The concept of andragogy

The concept of andragogy—and the idea that adult learners are fundamentally different from childhood learners—has since become widely accepted among educators.

Knowles built his ideas about andragogy around six core principles, that should guide how we build learning experiences for adults.

Let’s take a look at each of these principles and examine what they mean for adult learning & development professionals:

1: Adults *need to know why* they need to learn something

One of the first fundamental differences between adult and child learning is that adults don't want to go into learning without a justifiable purpose. As Knowles puts it, "Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking it."

When you think about the differences in a child's situation when they're learning vs. an adult's, this makes sense. Children are in school for hours each day for several years, with only a distant end in sight. Adults have more limited time and resources to dedicate to learning. If they don't understand the value of what they're learning, and how they can benefit from it, they're less likely to want to dedicate the time and effort required.

2: Adults have a *self-concept* of being responsible for their own decisions

In The Adult Learner, Knowles talks about the idea that adults see themselves as responsible, autonomous beings: “Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives.”

Adults will remember the teacher-student dynamics they followed as children, where a teacher imposed learning that they passively received. They are resistant to being in that position again.

Self-direction and self-evaluation are essential aspects of adult learning. In order to be effective, learners must be able to identify their own needs and take responsibility for their own learning.

3: Adults are a learning resource for their *peers*

Adult learners have more diverse individual experiences than child learners. They've been around longer to accumulate those experiences, and they have more experiences to build on. This greater experience has two important implications for adult learners:

The adult learners themselves are a resource for learning.
Adult learning should be personalized and individualized.

4: Adults are *ready to learn* what they need to know

Adults become ready to learn things as they become relevant to their current needs and priorities. They prioritize different learnings at different points, depending on the context.

In other words, adult learners have a readiness to learn the things they need in order to cope with real-life situations.

5: Adult learning is *solution-oriented*

In school, learners tend to learn about a subject. They learn about all the different aspects of mathematics like algebra, statistics, or calculus without always needing to know why or how this would help them to become better at being teenagers.

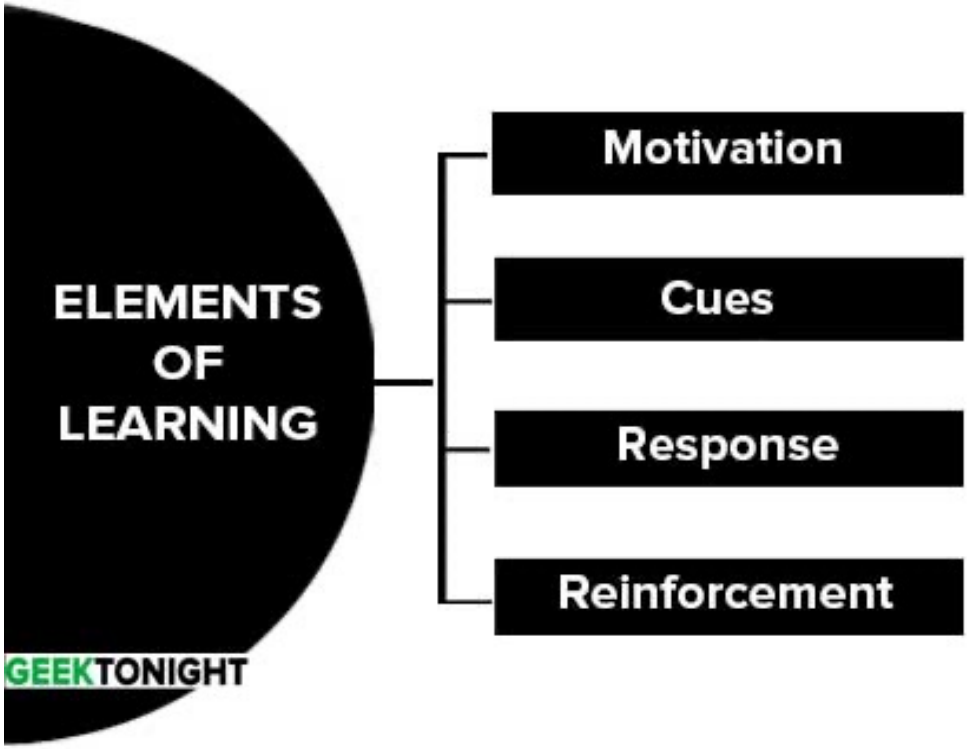
Conversely, adults want to learn something that will help them solve problems or achieve specific goals. Adults want to learn things that will help them perform tasks, and they are more likely to absorb new knowledge and skills when their application to real-life situations is clear.

6: Adults need internal motivation

For adults, the strongest motivations to learn are internal: things like job satisfaction, self-esteem, self-actualization, and quality of life are their biggest priorities. External motivators like raises, promotions, accolades, and pressure can still have an impact on their desire to learn, but they won't be as potent as internal factors, according to Knowles.

Components of learning are:

1. Motivation
2. Cues
3. Response
4. Reinforcement



Components of learning are:

Motivation

Motivation is based on need and goals. Motivation acts as a spur to learning, with needs and goals serving as stimuli. Uncovering consumer motives is one of the prime task of marketers.

Cues

Cues are the stimuli that give direction to those motives. In the market, marketing mix (place, price, packaging, styling, advertising and displays) serve as cues to help consumers fulfill their needs in product specific ways.

Response

How an individual reacts to a drive or cue constitutes his or her response. Learning can occur even if responses are not overt.

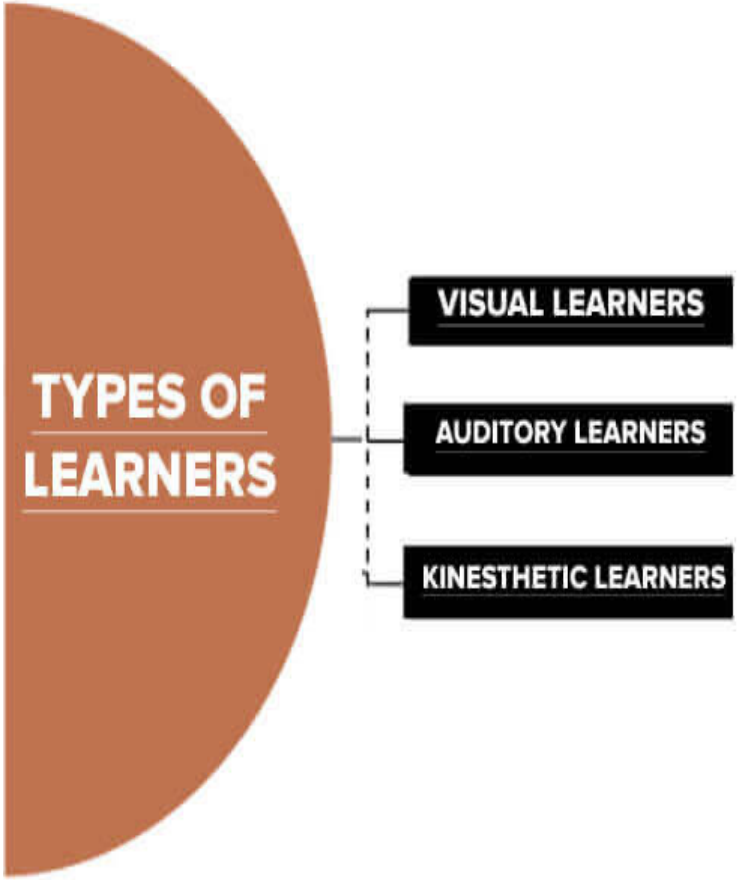
Reinforcement

Reinforcement increases the likelihood that a specific response will occur in the future as the result of particular cues or stimuli. Many marketers instinctively find that reinforcement serves to teach their customers a desired behavior.

Types of Learners

TYPES OF LEARNERS

1. Visual Learners
2. Auditory Learners
3. Kinesthetic Learners



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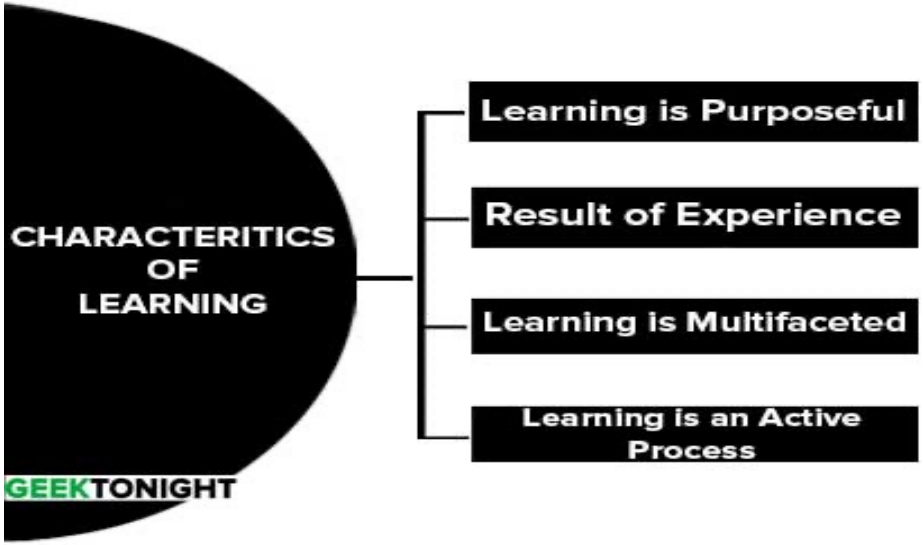
Characteristics of learning are:

Learning is Purposeful
Learning is a Result of Experience
Learning is Multifaceted
Learning is an Active Process



Learning is Purposeful

Each student sees a learning situation from a different viewpoint. Each student is a unique individual whose past experiences affect readiness to learn and understanding of the requirements involved.

Learning is a Result of Experience

Since learning is an individual process, the instructor cannot do it for the student. The student can learn only from personal experiences; therefore, learning and knowledge cannot exist apart from a person.

Learning is Multifaceted

Learning is multifaceted in still another way. While learning the subject at hand, students may be learning other things as well. They may be developing attitudes about aviation-good or bad-depending on what they experience.

Learning is an Active Process

Students do not soak up knowledge like a sponge absorbs water. The instructor cannot assume that students remember something just because they were in the classroom, shop, or airplane when the instructor presented the material.

"The soft stuff is still the hard stuff"

"In the field of food safety today, there is much documented about specific microbes, time/temperature processes, post-process contamination, and HACCP – things often called the hard sciences. There is not much published or discussed related to human behavior and culture – often referred to as the "soft stuff."

However, if you look at foodborne disease trends over the past few decades, it's clear to me that the soft stuff is still the hard stuff. We won't make dramatic improvements in reducing the global burden of foodborne disease, especially in certain parts of the food system and world, until we get much better at influencing and changing human behavior (the soft stuff)."

Frank Yiannas

Frank Yiannas is Vice Chair of the GFSI Board, Vice President – Food Safety, Walmart, and author of "Food Safety Culture, Creating a Behavior-based Food Safety Management System"

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